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Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/147 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, the present report provides information on measures taken by Member States and United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies to implement General Assembly resolutions 67/144 and 69/147. The report draws conclusions and proposes specific recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolutions 67/144 and 69/147, the General Assembly recognized that violence against women and girls is an impediment to their enjoyment of all human rights and their full participation in society, economy and political decision-making. It urged Member States to continue to adopt a more comprehensive approach to address all forms of violence against women and girls, including through measures that promote overall gender equality. Such measures should include, inter alia, the revision of discriminatory laws, strengthening women's economic autonomy and equal access to employment. It further urged Member States to address domestic violence as a matter of priority.

2. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-first session, a report on measures taken by States and the United Nations system, including on the assistance of the United Nations entities to States to implement the resolution. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request, based on research and information available in the Global Database on Violence against Women,[1] and the Inventory on United Nations Activities to End Violence against Women,[2] both administered by UN-Women, as well as information received from Member States and entities of the United Nations. It covers the period since the previous report (A/69/222) up to 17 June 2016.

II. Recent normative and policy developments

3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirmed the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women to the achievement of sustainable development, with the elimination of violence against women as a crucial component (General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 20). The elimination of all forms of violence against women, as a target area (Sustainable Development Goal 5.2) is included under Goal 5, "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", and it must be achieved within the deadlines set in the 2030 Agenda. That inclusion confirms that such violence is not only a barrier to gender equality, women's empowerment and overall sustainable development, but it is also an impediment to the achievement of other Goals, including on poverty eradication, health, education, food security and just and peaceful societies. As such, addressing violence against women should constitute a cross-cutting issue in policies and programmes aimed at the achievement of the other Goals. Principles of universality and human rights infuse the Sustainable Development Goals and commit that all women, regardless of their location, situation or circumstances, are entitled fully to enjoy their human rights and to lives free from violence. The 2030 Agenda builds on an existing international framework that addresses violence against women and girls, including the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women at it fifty-seventh session, as a comprehensive road map for States to address such violence.

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[1] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Global Database on Violence against Women, available from http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org.

[2] UN-Women, Inventory of United Nations Activities to End Violence against Women, available from http://evaw-un-inventory.unwomen.org/en.

4. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its sixtieth session, reaffirmed that the realization of gender equality is crucial to progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets, as well as the interlinkages between violence against women and the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development (see E/2016/27-E/CN.6/2016/22).

5. Other bodies and mechanisms of the United Nations continued to address violence against women. Some of the issues they considered included intimate partner violence (see A/HRC/32/L.28/REV.1), as well as its impact on women's economic and political empowerment (see A/HRC/26/14), and on the effective exercise of women's human rights in all areas of life, including their right to citizenship (see A/69/368). They also considered persistent challenges to addressing such violence owing to existing discriminatory family or personal status laws (see A/HRC/29/40).

6. United Nations entities continued to support Member States to further advance the global legal and policy framework in addressing violence against women and girls. In particular, UN-Women continued to not only lead and coordinate the United Nations system work on gender equality, but also to provide support to relevant intergovernmental bodies in their deliberations on violence against women and girls. As the substantive secretariat for the Commission on the Status of Women, for example, it provided substantive and technical guidance to Member States on items relating to ending violence against women. The entity, as part of the inter-agency working group on indicators, also provided technical and substantive inputs and advocated strongly for the inclusion of ending violence against women in the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

III. Linkages between violence against women and women's empowerment

7. Understanding violence against women as a continuum recognizes commonalities between different forms of violence, in public and private spheres. Such violence manifests and seeks to perpetuate inequality. Systematic gender inequality, discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women are recognized as the root causes of violence against women. Economic and political empowerment of women is thus imperative to eliminate such violence, as are sanctions for dealing with perpetrators. Evidence shows that the low economic and social status of women is a factor that may increase the risk of violence that women face, though the major risk factor is being female.

8. While gender inequality is known across time and context, the particularities of how it is experienced and what responses are available are rendered more complex for women located at the intersections of different dimensions of inequality. Such dimensions include race, disability, age and other factors. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits to "leave nobody behind",[3] and obliges us to turn greater and more considered attention to such complexity as work to eliminate violence against women progresses.

9. The focus of the present report is on specific forms of violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, violence and sexual harassment in workplaces,

[3] See General Assembly resolution 70/1.

and in public spaces more broadly, as well as violence against women when they exercise their political rights. The report will focus mainly on violence against women, though violence against girls will be covered within this context, as applicable.

10. These forms of violence are given attention here because of their particularly negative impact on women exercising their economic and political rights, including through their access to employment, voting and holding public office.

11. This report attends to three key linkages between economic and political empowerment of women and eliminating violence against them. Firstly, increasing economic independence is important to help survivors leave abusive relationships. In that context, the role of economic activity has been seen as a key to choice. It may enable a decision to leave or it may provide the means to sustain an independent life post-departure. Safety, however, can only be assured with other things in place, such as the perpetrator being kept away from the victim of abuse while the victim seeks to build a safe, independent life.

12. Second, increasing women's participation in political processes can raise the political dynamics towards gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. Finally, in exercising their economic and political rights, women often face violence and harassment, which impedes their overall empowerment. The following sub-sections will examine those interlinkages in more detail.

Intimate partner and domestic violence

13. Intimate partner violence[4] is one of most widespread forms of violence against women, based on the data available. It is also the form of violence for which the most information, as well as examples of good and promising practices to address it, is available. It is commonly referred to as domestic violence, and both terms are used in the present report in alignment with the terminology used by information and data sources cited.

14. It is estimated that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives, mostly by an intimate partner.[5] That prevalence is as high as 70 per cent in some countries.[6] Intimate partner violence can include depriving women of economic resources, or restricting their ability to exercise their political rights, including voting, or being a direct punishment against women who become leaders in their community (see A/HRC/23/50, para. 67).

15. Intimate partner and domestic violence cause more deaths than civil wars and entail much higher economic costs than those linked to homicides or civil wars (see A/HRC/29/40, para. 35). Individual women, communities and society at large

[4] According to the report of the Secretary-General on an in-depth study on all form of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1), intimate partner violence includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner. It also includes economic violence, which consists of denying a woman access to and control over basic resources.

[5] World Health Organization (WHO), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council, *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-partner Sexual Violence* (Geneva, WHO, 2013).

[6] UN-Women, "Violence against women prevalence data: surveys by country" (December 2012), available from www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/vawprevalence_matrix_june2013.pdf.

all suffer as a consequence of such abuse. Data show that women who are exposed to intimate partner violence are employed in higher numbers in casual and part-time work (see A/69/368, para. 35), and that their earnings from formal wage work are 60 per cent lower, compared to women who do not experience such violence in both cases.[7] This form of violence can have a serious inter-generational effect, as there is evidence that children who witness violence at home are at greater risk of engaging in violent behaviour as adults.[8]

16. Legal challenges to intimate partner and domestic violence require adequate enforcement of legislation, as well as ending discriminatory provisions, such as family or personal status laws. Such family or personal status laws regulate marriage or similar unions and family relations in the areas of management of property, freedom of movement, the custody of children and divorce. Additional challenges currently include reservations to articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on gender equality in the family and marriage (see CEDAW/C/GC/29, para. 3), or plural legal systems in many countries, where relations between married partners are determined by religious and customary laws and practices (ibid., para. 2).

17. Discriminatory family or personal status laws can restrict women's lives and choices in several ways. These include freedom of movement and enjoyment of economic and political rights. A recent analysis showed that in 18 out of 173 countries considered husbands can still lawfully prevent their wives from working.[7,9] A recent study explored the relationship between inequality in family law and levels of violence against women in 141 countries, concluding that they are strongly related.[10] Progress to revise such discriminatory laws has been uneven across regions, with successful outcomes in countries where there was longstanding mobilization by women's rights movements.[11]

18. The association between economic empowerment of women and intimate partner and domestic violence is often complex. The adverse impact of women's economic empowerment on violence against women in the short term, as the traditional gender roles may have been challenged, should be considered by adopting a more holistic approach to prevent violence.

19. The experience of intimate partner and domestic violence is a significant barrier to women's access, equal treatment and opportunities in economic and political life. As a result, it impedes women's empowerment and economic independence. On the other hand, women's access to work and economic resources has the potential to prevent violence against women in family and intimate relationships through increased negotiating power and economic means to support themselves to leave abusive relationships. Such efforts should be undertaken in

[7] World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal* (Washington, D.C., 2015).

[8] WHO, *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014* (Geneva, 2014).

[9] The term country, being used interchangeably with economy, by the World Bank, see World Bank, "How does the World Bank classify countries", available from https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/378834-how-does-the-world-bank-classify-countries.

[10] Valerie M. Hudson, Donna Lee Bowen and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen, "What is the relationship between inequity in family law and violence against women? Approaching the issue of legal enclaves", *Politics and Gender*, vol. 7, No. 4 (December 2011).

[11] UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015).

parallel with efforts to prevent and respond to the violent behaviour of men against women. For example, data show that women's engagement in paid work and ownership of property are associated with significant reductions in marital violence.[12]

Sexual harassment in public spaces

20. Women's and girls' mobility, and thus their access to economic, social and political life, is impacted by sexual harassment in public spaces, including in streets and public transportation. This form of violence against women has not been measured adequately, and it has gained little attention in national legal and policy frameworks. In the analysis of 173 countries, the World Bank showed that provisions covering sexual harassment in employment (114 countries) are common, while very few protect women from sexual harassment in public spaces (18 countries).[7]

Violence in workplaces

21. Women are frequently subject to unwelcome scrutiny, harassment and violence at work, but data on that is limited.[13] Data, published in 2014 from a survey conducted in all Member States of the European Union, show that 55 per cent of women have experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15. Of those women, 32 per cent reported that the perpetrator was somebody from the employment context, such as a colleague, a supervisor or a client.[14] Women often face increased risks of harassment and violence in particular contexts, such as when working outside the normal working hours, or when working in the same place where they live, as it is the case, for instance, for migrant domestic workers (see A/70/205). Provisions to protect women against discrimination in the workplace, including against sexual harassment, have been included in the laws of some countries (see E/CN.6/2015/3).

22. Workplaces can also be sites, however, where women can find protection from domestic and intimate partner violence, through support, information and referral to services. They can also contribute to preventing violence against women in general by promoting gender equality and by changing social norms that condone or tolerate such violence.

Violence against women in political life

23. Research has suggested that women's inclusion in politics brings issues to the political agenda that favour women's concerns, including reform of discriminatory

[12] Georgia Taylor and others, "Addressing violence against women and girls through DFID's Economic Development and Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes", Department for International Development Guidance Note, part A (February 2015).

[13] Adrienne Cruz and Sabine Klinger, *Gender-based Violence in the World of Work: Overview and Selected Annotated Bibliography*, Working Paper, No. 3 (Geneva, International Labour Organization (ILO), 2011).

[14] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against Women: An EU-wide Survey — Main Results* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014).

partner and domestic violence, violence and sexual harassment in workplaces and public spaces more broadly and violence in political life. These responses will be examined in the areas of laws, prevention, services and responses, and data collection and research.

A. Legislation

27. There was considerable progress during the reporting period in addressing intimate partner and domestic violence through the adoption of laws. To date, 127 of 173 countries examined have laws on domestic violence. The importance of laws addressing intimate partner and domestic violence was highlighted in a recent analysis of data collected in 173 countries by the World Bank, which demonstrated that life expectancy for women is higher where they are legally protected from domestic violence.[7]

28. Many reporting Member States have adopted or revised legislation on domestic violence and intimate partner violence (Albania, Argentina, Colombia, China, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Sweden and Switzerland), often with the support of the United Nations system. Such laws often have a focus on a special area, such as prevention through educational programmes, as well as on active engagement with the media (China and Turkey). Other laws expanded definitions of domestic violence or the scope of protection by including the notion of femicide (Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Italy) or by making sanctions against violence against pregnant women or perpetrated in front of the victim's children more severe (Morocco).

29. Morocco addressed loopholes in its legislation by repealing the clause that exempts the prosecution of the rape offenders in the case of subsequent marriage of the victim to the perpetrator. Some States strengthened the application of civil protection orders to better protect survivors in the aftermath of violence (Georgia, Singapore and Sweden).

30. Domestic violence laws often cover physical, sexual and psychological violence, but may exclude economic violence. Economic violence consists of denying a woman's access to and control over basic resources. As such, it deprives women of economic means and complicates women's choices regarding dealing with abusive relationships. States, such as Lebanon and Tonga, addressed economic violence either in new or revised laws (Hungary, Italy and New Zealand). Economic violence remains to be addressed in 94 of the 173 countries.[7]

31. Unequal relations between spouses or partners during a marriage or other union may affect a woman's financial situation and earning capacity, rendering her in a vulnerable situation when attempting to leave an abusive relationship. Comprehensive legislation on violence against women should be accompanied by family law provisions that enable survivors who wish to end violent situations (by either leaving or ejecting the abuser) access to an equal share of marital or relationship property, to gain custody of their children and to receive spousal and child support. During the reporting period, Member States strengthened their legislation to that end. For example, Tunisia withdrew its reservation to article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on equality in family. Other States regulated the ownership or management of marital property on an equal basis between spouses or partners (Hungary), as well as in

Chile, Croatia and Kenya. In Kiribati, legislation was adopted to provide for financial support to the spouse in financial need in case of divorce.[7]

32. At workplaces, women may face violence and harassment. Member States continued to address violence and sexual harassment in workplaces by adopting new laws or adding specific provisions to existing legislation (Albania, Argentina, Egypt, India, Nepal and Morocco). Belgium strengthened women's protection in workplaces through the provision of civil remedies.[7]

33. Violence perpetrated through information and communication technologies is an increasing concern to many countries, including when it occurs in workplaces. To respond to that challenge, countries expanded the scope of the legislation to include, for example, online harassment. In the Philippines, a new law on sexual harassment includes any act that may be committed, including within or outside the place of employment, and with the use of technology.

34. Addressing sexual harassment in public spaces, including in streets and on public transportation is important to ensure women's mobility and access to workplaces and the exercise of their political rights. During the reporting period, only a few Member States, including Egypt,[7] addressed that form of violence in their laws (Peru and Philippines).

35. Legislation is required to protect women from violence and harassment while exercising their political rights. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has adopted legislation to address that gap, while other countries in the region are considering similar legislation, including Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Peru.[20] In an expert group meeting, held in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in May 2016, several Member States in the region considered a model law to address this type of violence.[7] Other States put in place regulations aimed at preventing violence against women candidates and voters (Nepal).

36. United Nations entities continued to support Member States to adopt or improve laws that address violence against women and girls. In Myanmar, UNODC provided inputs to bring legislation related to violence against women into line with international standards and norms. UN-Women, together with UNODC, conducted a gap analysis of Viet Nam's Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, providing research findings and key United Nations joint recommendations for strengthening effective responses to violence against women, including on domestic and intimate partner violence, to the National Assembly. In Mexico, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and Girls (United Nations Trust Fund), an inter-agency United Nations mechanism, administered by UN-Women, supported Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir ("Catholics for the Right to Decide"), on the implementation of relevant laws, in compliance with the rulings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

37. Despite progress, there are still persistent challenges in the areas of addressing these forms of violence and their implementation. In a survey of 133 countries on issues concerning violence prevention, only 44 per cent of countries with laws on domestic violence reported that such laws had been fully enforced.[8] There were also 32 countries out of the 173 examined by the World Bank that retain clauses

[20] See Organization of American States, "Second meeting of experts on political violence against women", held in La Paz on 30 and 31 May 2016, available from http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=f4f9c21ffdd25a4e4ef06e3c2&id=bc70f6b331&e=b876f6c081.

exempting perpetrators of rape from prosecution when they are married to or subsequently marry the victim.[7]

38. Remaining gaps in laws addressing violence in workplaces are often of limited scope, not covering a wide range of workplaces, including homes, where, for example, domestic workers are located. The assessment of their impact is limited, as data on the prevalence of this aspect of violence remain scarce.[11] In addition, legislation to address sexual harassment in public spaces and violence against women in the political sphere remains very limited.

B. Prevention measures

39. Member States continued to undertake interventions, often with the support of the United Nations system, to address discriminatory societal attitudes and practices that condone violence against women in general, or domestic and intimate partner violence (Argentina, Czech Republic, Mexico, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia and Turkey).

40. These interventions often targeted men and boys, including through awareness-raising campaigns, supporting men's organizations and developing special policies aimed at reaching men and boys. (Albania, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Morocco, Sweden and Uganda). United Nations entities, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN-Women, continued to engage men and boys by involving youth, parliamentarians, sports federations and faith-based organizations.

41. Other interventions included the development of policies, awareness-raising campaigns and mobilization of communities (Albania, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Djibouti, Georgia, Italy, Mexico, Monaco, Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Sweden, Uganda), also by utilizing a broad range of material, such as television/radio spots and social media (Cambodia, Greece and Morocco). UNICEF, IOM and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, through social media, also improved public awareness of violence against women and girls. UN-Women continued significant global advocacy through the UNiTE campaign of the Secretary-General to end violence against women, and a number of "Orange Day" activities on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Limited information was provided, however, on innovative interventions to prevent violence through the usage of new technologies and information.

42. A few Member States indicated that they have adopted a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of domestic violence (Australia, Japan and Norway). Evidence shows that such a comprehensive approach that includes multi-component interventions at different levels (society, community, relationship and individual) is necessary to address the multiple factors that increase the risk of violence that women may face. The first ever United Nations system framework on the prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence by non-partners also reflects such a comprehensive approach. UN-Women coordinated the development

of the framework, in partnership with ILO, OHCHR, the United Nations Development Progamme (UNDP), UNESCO, UNFPA and WHO.[21]

43. The global research programme What Works to Prevent Violence, supported by the Department for International Development (United Kingdom), has been building the evidence on what works to prevent violence against women in general, including intimate partner and domestic violence. Findings show that interventions are effective when they aim to transform gender stereotypes and to change concepts of masculinities, or when they work with both men and women, compared to single-sex interventions. Evidence also indicates that certain interventions can reduce intimate partner violence. These interventions include community mobilization that involves both men and women, boys and girls, reducing intimate partner violence up to 52 per cent,[22] or microfinance programmes when combined with gender training and the engagement of both men and women, reducing such violence up to 50 per cent.[23]

44. The increased access of women to employment and to workplaces, either male-dominated or where stereotyped masculinities prevail, can increase the risk of violence and harassment against them. Despite the crucial role of legislation to address violence against women in the workplace, additional efforts, including through the development of policies and tools, are necessary to support their implementation. To achieve that, Member States produced guidelines and tools to guide private sector employers and workers' unions in developing anti-sexual harassment policies and measures (China, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan and Nepal). Other States, including Viet Nam,[24] developed codes of conduct on sexual harassment in workplaces, and conducted gender audits, including Ireland[25] and the United States of America,[26] to better inform prevention policies and interventions addressing sexual harassment and violence in workplaces.

45. In addition to the implementation of laws, it is essential to change social norms that condone violence against women in workplaces. Training and awareness-raising campaigns conducted in workplaces can be associated with a change in attitudes and increased knowledge about sexual harassment, particularly among men.[11] As a result, growing numbers of employers in several countries have developed training modules on gender equality and the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace (Australia and Norway), and have organized sensitization campaigns (Finland and Lithuania). While such measures are

[21] UN-Women, "A framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women", 2015, available from www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/11/prevention-framework.

[22] Charlotte Watts and others, "The SASA! study: a cluster randomized trial to assess the impact of a violence and HIV-prevention programme in Kampala, Uganda", Impact Evaluation Report, No. 24 (New Delhi, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 2015). Available from http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/impact-evaluations/details/292/.

[23] Diana J. Arango and others, "Interventions to prevent or reduce violence against women and girls: a systematic review of reviews, Women's Voice and Agency Research Series, No. 10 (World Bank, 2014).

[24] Viet Nam, Ministry of Labour and others, *Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, (Hanoi, 2014).

[25] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, "Code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment at work" (2015).

[26] Donna Chung, Carole Zufferey and Anastasia Powell, *Preventing Violence against Women in the Workplace: An Evidence Review — Full Report*" (Melbourne, Australia, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2012)

promising, there is limited evidence on what works to address violence against women in the workplace, as few evaluations of interventions have been conducted.

46. States increasingly recognize the important role of workplaces in preventing violence against women in general. As such, in Australia workplace managers have increasingly adopted relevant measures, including awareness-raising and training of staff on gender equality and respectful relationships.

47. Recognizing that violence against women in political life constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to the realization of women's political rights, Member States and other actors, including political parties, civil society actors and United Nations entities, have developed measures to prevent such violence.

48. In several African countries, civil society groups and activists have aimed to reduce violence in electoral periods through monitoring, mediation and public awareness. The Women's Situation Room aims to raise awareness of, monitor and respond to violence during elections by engaging all stakeholders in constructive dialogue and peace advocacy. The Women's Situation Room model has been implemented with the support of UNDP and UN-Women in several States, including Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda.

49. Initiatives were undertaken during the reporting period, with the support of United Nations entities, with the objective of raising awareness about the extent of violence that women face when exercising their political rights. UNDP and UN-Women particularly supported activities targeting electoral management bodies and focusing on legislators, parliamentary networks and political parties in Fiji, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Sudan and Vanuatu. Other programmes receiving technical support from UNDP and UN-Women aimed at raising awareness on women's electoral and political rights targeted at women leaders, candidates and aspirants in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Libya, and the general public, particularly women voters, in several African countries, including Burundi, Mali and Zimbabwe.

50. Member States are gradually taking action to prevent violence and harassment against women, particularly in urban spaces, as a significant barrier to women's mobility to exercise their economic and political rights. To improve women's economic independence in Papua New Guinea, through their access to markets as vendors, UN-Women supported the improvement of infrastructures and the development of systems to prevent violence against women, including through innovative cashless methods for collection of fees that prevent extortion and theft.

51. Recognizing that each city is unique and that it requires a response adapted to the local context, several States, including India, Mexico and the Philippines, also supported by UN-Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme, conducted diagnostic studies, by involving women and other community members, to collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to better inform policies and interventions. In Egypt and India, with support from UN-Women, the women's safety audits, namely, the assessments of public spaces, by and for women, have been promising in supporting decision-making with practical solutions and approaches that can make urban spaces safer for women.

52. Participatory diagnostic studies show that urban planning can improve public safety for women. Member States, such as Ecuador and Egypt, with support from

UN-Women, Central African Republic, supported by IOM, and France,[27] took action to improve their urban planning, including lighting, and transportation infrastructure. Other States increased capacity at the local level, either through the training of municipal and public transportation staff (Rwanda) or by sensitizing police forces and hiring more women police officers (Albania and Azerbaijan).

C. Support services and responses

53. The majority of Member States reported on the provision of services and responses to victims/survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence, some of which were prompted by the high rates of such violence associated with gender-related killings or femicide (Italy and Norway). Many referred to the provision of 24-hour hotlines, referral mechanisms, shelters, psychosocial counselling, legal aid, specialized courts and justice services, and specialized case management processes (Albania, Australia, Hungary, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Serbia, Singapore and Timor-Leste).

54. Countries are also increasingly using technology to promote the availability of services. Brazil, for example, supported by UN-Women, recently developed an online application for mobile phones to provide women with information on violence, legislation and available services, but also to identify unsafe areas of the city and to rate the quality of services provision.

55. The quality of services has also received attention. Global data shows that only 40 per cent of women who experience violence seek help, mainly from friends and family. Of the 40 per cent seeking assistance, only 10 per cent seek assistance from police.[28] Reasons include lack of trust in the quality of services being provided, as well as the capacity of service providers. To respond to that challenge, and in line with good practice, Cambodia focused on improving the quality of services through the development and implementation of minimum standards in key areas of services provision for victims/survivors of domestic violence and other forms of violence.

56. Efforts to improve the quality of services and service provision to survivors were also supported by the United Nations system. For example, a partnership between UN-Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC led to the development of the Essential Services Package. The package provides guidelines for the provision of services to women experiencing violence, particularly domestic and intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, in different sectors.[29] Full use of the package can be considered good practice for service delivery. The United Nations Trust Fund supported the Grassroot Soccer programme in Cape Town, South Africa, which uses sports to foster girls' empowerment, supports their

[27] France, Ministry of the Interior, Sécurité des femmes dans les transports en commun: plan national de lutte contre le harcèlement sexiste et les violences sexuelles (2015). Available from www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/action/piece-jointe/2015/07/plan-national-de-lutte-contre-le-harcelement-sexiste-et-les-violences-sexuelles-dans-les-transports-en-commun.pdf.

[28] *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XVII.8).

[29] UN-Women and others, "Essential services package for women and girls subject to violence" (2015), available from www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence.

awareness of sexual and reproductive health and increases their access to medical, legal and psychosocial services. In 2014 and 2015, the Trust Fund reached some 1,233 girls in 8 schools. It also supported the NGO Najoti kudakon in Tajikistan, which has created six women's support groups, where women provide support to women who experience domestic violence.

57. Long-term assistance is necessary to ensure the full recovery of women in the aftermath of violence, as well as to reduce the risks of re-victimization. Such assistance includes access to economic resources and employment opportunities, access to long-term housing and reintegration into society. While some States referred to training and skills-building programmes for victims/survivors (Albania, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Mexico and Tunisia), including with support from UNIDO, a limited number of Member States identified specific interventions concerning long-term support for survivors of domestic violence. The lack of such long-term support to survivors of intimate partner and domestic violence renders women more vulnerable to future violence and remains a critical gap for all countries.

58. Responses taken by workplaces to respond not only to violence that takes place in the workplace, but also to violence that women may experience in their personal lives, particularly domestic and intimate partner violence, are critical. They not only assist individual women in seeking necessary support and assistance, where they may not have any other opportunity to do so, they also increase productivity in the workplace and reduce potential economic costs from absences owing to violence.

59. Good practices in responses to violence and harassment against women include clearly defined policies and immediate responses to such violence. Such responses may include procedures to ensure filing of complaints, as well as the monitoring and investigation of cases of harassment and violence. They should also include the referral of victims to support services and the recording of facts and figures to ensure that relevant policies are in place and implemented.[30] Some countries, such as Nepal, have introduced such measures to respond to sexual harassment in the workplace through the development of mechanisms for women to report allegations of such harassment.

60. In addition to responses to sexual harassment and other forms of violence occurring in the workplace, many workplaces also respond to women experiencing domestic and intimate partner violence. One study noted that such responses may include supporting individual staff and managers to recognize signs that an employee might be experiencing violence from a partner; responding appropriately to a disclosure of violence; and referring such employees to an appropriate service and/or to report their experience.[31]

61. The provision of paid leave for survivors of domestic violence and the development of toolkits and other resources on effective responses for application in the workplace to respond to domestic violence are also promising measures

[30] European Public Service Union, "European social dialogue: multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work", 2010, available from www.epsu.org/article/multi-sectoral-guidelines-tackle-third-party-violence-and-harassment-related-work.

[31] Anastasia Powell, Larissa Sandy and Jessica Findling, "Promising practices in workplace and organizational approaches for the prevention of violence against women" (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, 2015).

(Australia and New Zealand). Funded by the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women, a number of organizations in the United States have created a "one stop" online resource that provides comprehensive advice and tools for responding to domestic and sexual violence in the workplace.[32] Other initiatives in Ireland[25] and the United States[26] include staff surveys, which contribute to assist employers in identifying and referring victims/survivors of violence, particularly women and girls, but also as an effective tool to measure programme success and to inform future interventions.

62. While the majority of the interventions on sexual harassment by Member States focus on the workplace, interventions targeting such harassment in public spaces are increasing. For example, in France, the Government recently unveiled measures to curb sexual harassment on public transportation following a poll in which 100 per cent of women surveyed said they had been confronted with the problem. Measures include introducing an emergency telephone number to report harassment and the creation of an online application to locate areas where incidents of violence occur.[7]

D. Data collection and research

63. Understanding the extent, the nature and the consequences of violence against women is important in order to inform legislation, policies and programmes. In order to achieve that, Member States continue to collect data and compile statistics relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women, especially domestic and intimate partner violence, either through prevalence surveys (Cambodia, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Peru and Turkey), or through administrative records and management information systems from those services most used by women survivors of violence. Although most Member States reported on administrative data from such services, in many countries these data were often not disaggregated by sex and did not record the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator.

64. Currently, more than 100 countries have conducted at least one prevalence survey on violence against women, including domestic or intimate partner violence. More than 40 countries have conducted at least two surveys in the period between 1995 and 2014, which means that, depending on the comparability of the surveys, trends and changes over time could begin to be analysed.[28]

65. The availability of prevalence data on violence against women, however, still remains uneven across and within countries. Many countries still do not have data on domestic or intimate partner violence, while quality, reliability and comparability of the data across and within countries remain a challenge for those countries with available data (see E/2016/75). To address that challenge, United Nations entities have developed methodological tools and guidance to support the collection of data on violence against women, such as the *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical Surveys*.[33]

66. Member States are increasingly dedicating efforts to improve understanding of forms of violence for which evidence is still scarce, such as violence in workplaces, as well as sexual harassment and violence in political life. Since 2006, the National

[32] See www.workplacesrespond.org/.

[33] *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical Surveys* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.7).

Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationship in Mexico, for example, has collected data not only on domestic and intimate partner violence, but also on sexual harassment at work and school and in social groups. That has helped make visible other forms and expressions of violence beyond that occurring in the private sphere, and confirms that violence against women occurs not only at home but in all social spaces.[34]

67. Member States also report research on various themes concerning violence against women, such as the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress domestic or intimate partner violence, as well as gender-based cyber-violence (Armenia, Finland, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Turkey).

68. UN-Women serves as the secretariat of the Global Database on Violence against Women, which was launched in March 2016. The database, formerly the United Nations Secretary-General's database on violence against women, provides easy access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on the prevalence of violence against women and measures undertaken by Member States to address all forms of violence against women in the areas of laws and policies, prevention, services, data collection and research.

69. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, provide a valuable platform to increase the availability of data on several forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic and intimate partner violence. They can also improve the quality, the reliability and the comparability of such data across countries.

70. This framework includes two indicators on the prevalence of physical, sexual and psychological violence by an intimate partner, as well as of sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the previous 12 months to monitor progress of the specific target to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls (target 5.2). Other indicators related to violence against women and girls, that is, prevalence of physical and sexual harassment by sex and place of occurrence (target 11.7) and number of victims of intentional homicide by sex (target 16.1), are also part of the framework, and will allow assessment of other violence, including in public spaces.

71. The framework also includes indicators on women's participation in political, economic and public life, as well as their rights to economic resources. It includes an indicator on average hourly earnings of female and male employees, as well as an indicator on legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

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[34] Irene Casique Rodriguez, "Production of national statistics on violence against women: data sources, challenges and lessons learned", paper presented for the interactive expert panel on the review theme: addressing data gaps and methodology issues at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 2016. Available from www2.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/meetings/csw60-expert_panel-irene%20caciques-paper.pdf?v=1&d=20160415T170814; National Institute of Statistics and Geography and others, "Mexico national survey on the dynamics of household relationships 2006", available from http://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/mexico-national-survey-dynamics-household-relationships-2006.

72. It is expected that countries will increasingly report on these indicators in accordance with agreed international standards and that, when these standards do not exist, as, for example, in the case of physical and sexual harassment, these will be developed to provide guidance to countries.

73. The implementation of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals indicators framework will require, however, appropriate interventions to strengthen national statistical capacities (see E/2016/24-E/CN.3/2016/34).

74. The availability of these data, upon the requirement that Member States will report on it, will allow for analysis of the relation between different manifestations of gender inequality, such as domestic and intimate partner violence, violence in public spaces, women's economic empowerment and women's political participation. The data will help understand the violence experienced by women and girls in a more comprehensive way and develop strategies and policies that address all forms of violence experienced by women and girls in a more effective manner.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

75. Despite decades of work to address violence against women, it remains persistent and ubiquitous. The tenacity of this expression of gender inequality is not to be underestimated. Understanding of such abuse has grown, initiatives to reduce it have been tried and intolerance of violence is building globally. The commitments in the new sustainable development agenda confirm that. However, in order to fulfil the promise made to women that violence will be eliminated by 2030, a step change in our collective efforts is required. For violence against women to become a relic of history, the following gaps and actions need to be prioritized.

76. Violence against women and girls is a complex phenomenon and cannot be attributed to only one factor. Multi-sectoral interventions are often missing to prevent and respond to such violence while collaboration and coordination between multiple stakeholders and different sectors within the Government is not always effective. There is growing evidence and knowledge on the inter-linkages between violence against women and their political and economic empowerment, but further research and analysis are required to fully understand causality, impacts and consequences.

77. Many actions have been taken by States to address violence against women, including domestic and intimate partner violence, in the areas of laws, prevention, services and responses, data collection and research. Limited information was provided, however, about the impact and the sustainability of these interventions.

78. Despite the increasing number of laws addressing intimate partner and domestic violence, there are still significant gaps in the forms of violence being addressed, such as economic violence, and violence that takes place in public spaces and the political sphere. In addition, significant gaps remain in other relevant areas of law, such as family law. The greatest challenge remains, however, the lack of the implementation of laws.

79. **While the range of prevention initiatives is expanding beyond awareness-raising, a more comprehensive approach is still required, while more focus needs to be placed on the prevention of violence in particular contexts and spaces, including in public spaces, and in relation to women's political participation. More research is needed on innovative approaches to prevent such violence through information and new technologies.**

80. **Responses to violence against women in the workplace are an important part of comprehensive responses to such violence, both to ensure women's safety and their ongoing access to employment and empowerment. Increasingly, workplaces are not only responding to violence that takes place on their premises, but also to violence that takes place in women's personal lives, particularly domestic and intimate partner violence.**

81. **Despite efforts of Member States, services and responses to domestic and intimate partner violence remain focused on the immediate aftermath of violence. Long-term support, critical to survivors' recovery and full participation in society, as well the prevention of future violence, remains a critical gap in nearly all countries.**

82. **Significant gaps remain in the collection of data on the prevalence of violence against women that are internationally consistent and comparable, particularly in the areas of violence and sexual harassment against women in public spaces and in political life. Improvements in this area are critical for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and targets on violence against women. Administrative data collection remains a gap for all countries.**

B. Recommendations

83. **States should strengthen the collaboration among different sectors of the Government to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and increase investments in this area.**

84. **States should continue the collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including United Nations entities and civil society, including youth and faith-based organizations. States and the United Nations entities should support building strong and independent women's organizations, including through consistent funding.**

85. **States, the United Nations entities and researchers should continue research and analysis on the impact of women's economic, social and political empowerment on violence against women.**

86. **States should include all forms of intimate partner violence in their legislation, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. Such legislation should be complemented with legislation that ensures equality between partners or spouses within marriage or intimate relationship. Member States should continue adopting laws to address violence against women in political life, as well as in public spaces and workplaces, by ensuring that workplaces are understood as including domestic spaces as well.**

87. States should place greater emphasis on providing long-term support and assistance to survivors of violence to ensure their full recovery and to support their full participation in all aspects of the society, including political and economic life.

88. States, in collaboration with employers' and workers' associations, should strengthen their efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women, which occurs not only at workplaces, but also in women's personal lives. They should ensure that appropriate tools, such as anti-harassment policies and codes of conduct, as well reporting and investigation mechanisms, are in place to ensure women's safety and perpetrators' accountability. They should ensure that workplace cultures are based on gender equality and respectful relationships.

89. States, in collaboration with political parties, civil society, United Nations entities and other organizations, should enhance their efforts to prevent violence against women in political life, including through awareness-raising and advocacy, and monitoring, including through fact-based assessments and data collection, which can contribute to establishing the necessary evidence base to promote prevention of such violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

90. Relevant departments of Governments, such as national statistical offices, together with United Nations entities and other stakeholders, should work together to ensure that national capacities are built and sustained to implement violence against women national prevalence surveys in alignment with international global standards and with the Sustainable Development Goals monitoring and reporting requirements.

91. States, together with the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, should also consider the development of methodologies to collect data on other forms of violence against women, such as violence occurring in public spaces, including in political life.

92. Efforts should be made by States to improve the administrative and management information systems of those services for survivors of violence and ensure that, at a minimum, data are disaggregated by sex and relationship between the survivor and perpetrator, and that the data are collected, stored and used in a confidential and ethical manner.